



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CH358

Site Name: Clifton

Prehistoric ☒

Other name(s)

Historic ☒

Unknown ☐

Brief Description:

Early Archaic to Late Woodland short-term camps with stratified sequence, early to mid-18th century plantation

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Latitude 38.6554 Longitude -76.9819

Elevation m Site slope 0-2%

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

-Lat/Long accurate to within 1 sq. mile, user may need to make slight adjustments in mapping to account for sites near state/county lines or streams

Maryland Archeological Research Unit No. 11

SCS soil & sediment code Bo,ShB2

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site ☒

Underwater site ☐

Ethnobotany profile available ☐ Maritime site ☐

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Piney Branch

Saltwater

Ocean ☐

Estuary/tidal river ☐

Tidewater/marsh ☐

Spring ☐

Minimum distance to water is 185 m

Freshwater

Stream/river ☒

Swamp ☒

Lake or pond ☐

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site ☐

Woodland site ☐

Archaic site ☐

MD Adena ☐

Early archaic ☒

Early woodland ☒

Middle archaic ☒

Mid. woodland ☒

Late archaic ☒

Late woodland ☒

Contact period site ☐

ca. 1820 - 1860 ☐

ca. 1630 - 1675 ☐

ca. 1860 - 1900 ☐

ca. 1675 - 1720 ☐

ca. 1900 - 1930 ☐

ca. 1720 - 1780 ☒

Post 1930 ☐

ca. 1780 - 1820 ☐

Unknown historic context ☐

Unknown prehistoric context ☐

Unknown context ☐

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American ☐

Asian American ☐

African American ☐

Unknown ☐

Anglo-American ☒

Other ☐

Hispanic ☐

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

Historic

Urban/Rural? Rural ☒

Domestic

Homestead ☒

Farmstead ☒

Mansion ☐

Plantation ☒

Row/townhome ☐

Cellar ☐

Privy ☐

Industrial

Mining-related ☐

Quarry-related ☐

Mill ☐

Black/metalsmith ☐

Furnace/forge ☐

Other ☐

Transportation

Canal-related ☐

Road/railroad ☐

Wharf/landing ☐

Maritime-related ☐

Bridge ☐

Ford ☐

Educational

Commercial

Trading post ☐

Store ☐

Tavern/inn ☐

Military

Battlefield ☐

Fortification ☐

Encampment ☐

Townsite

Religious

Church/mtg house ☐

Ch support bldg ☐

Burial area

Cemetery ☐

Sepulchre ☐

Isolated burial ☐

Bldg or foundation ☒

Possible Structure ☐

Post-in-ground ☒

Frame-built ☐

Masonry ☐

Other structure ☐

Slave related

Non-domestic agri ☐

Recreational ☐

Midden/dump ☐

Artifact scatter ☐

Spring or well ☐

Unknown ☐

Other context ☐

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken ☒

Flotation samples taken ☒

Other samples taken Blood residue

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken ☒

Flotation samples taken ☒

Other samples taken



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types	
Clovis	<input type="text"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="text"/>
Palmer	<input type="text"/>
Kirk (notch)	4
Kirk (stem)	<input type="text"/>
Le Croy	4
Morrow Mntn	2
Guilford	1
Brewerton	2
Otter Creek	1
Koens-Crispin	<input type="text"/>
Perkiomen	<input type="text"/>
Susquehanna	<input type="text"/>
Vernon	<input type="text"/>
Piscataway	12
Calvert	<input type="text"/>
Selby Bay	<input type="text"/>
Jacks Rf (notch)	1
Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="text"/>
Madison/Potomac	<input type="text"/>
Levanna	3

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="text"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="text"/>	Shepard	<input type="text"/>	Keyser	<input type="text"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="text"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="text"/>	Townsend	1	Yeocomico	<input type="text"/>
Selden Island	<input type="text"/>	Watson	<input type="text"/>	Minguannan	<input type="text"/>	Monongahela	<input type="text"/>
Accokeek	5	Mockley	<input type="text"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="text"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="text"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="text"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="text"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="text"/>		
Vinette	<input type="text"/>	Page	<input type="text"/>	Moyaone	<input type="text"/>		
				Potomac Cr	34		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	<input type="text"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="text"/>	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="text"/>	Jackfield	<input type="text"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="text"/>	English Brown	<input type="text"/>
Borderware	<input type="text"/>	Mn Mottled	1	Whiteware	3	Eng Dry-bodie	<input type="text"/>
Buckley	<input type="text"/>	North Devon	<input type="text"/>	Porcelain	4	Nottingham	<input type="text"/>
Creamware	<input type="text"/>	Pearlware	<input type="text"/>			Rhenish	<input type="text"/>
						Wt Salt-glazed	3

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts	
Flaked stone	13603
Ground stone	9
Stone bowls	1
Fire-cracked rock	2491
Other lithics (all)	21
Ceramics (all)	40
Rimsherds	4
Other fired clay	<input type="text"/>
Human remain(s)	<input type="text"/>
Modified faunal	<input type="text"/>
Unmod faunal	9
Oyster shell	<input type="text"/>
Floral material	<input type="text"/>
Uncommon Obj.	3
Other	<input type="text"/>

Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	<input type="text"/>	Storage/trash pit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Midden	<input type="text"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="text"/>
Shell midden	<input type="text"/>	Ossuary	<input type="text"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="text"/>	Unknown	<input type="text"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input type="text"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="text"/>		
Hearth(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Lithic reduc area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Lithic Material

Jasper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fer quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sil sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="checkbox"/>	European flint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="text"/>
		Sandstone	<input type="text"/>		

☒ Dated features present at site

Prehistoric Feature 2 was C-14 dated & contained diagnostic sherds. Three historic features contained small concentrations of 18th century ceramics.

Historic Artifacts	
Pottery (all)	460
Glass (all)	447
Architectural	182
Furniture	<input type="text"/>
Arms	21
Clothing	<input type="text"/>
Personal items	<input type="text"/>
Tobacco related	<input type="text"/>
Activity item(s)	<input type="text"/>
Human remain(s)	<input type="text"/>
Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Misc. kitchen	875
Floral material	<input type="text"/>
Misc.	312
Other	<input type="text"/>

Historic Features

Privy/outhouse	<input type="text"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="text"/>	Unknown	<input type="text"/>
Const feature	<input type="text"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input type="text"/>
Foundation	<input type="text"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="text"/>		
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="text"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="text"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="text"/>
Hearth/chimney	<input type="text"/>	Sheet midden	<input type="text"/>	Earthworks	<input type="text"/>
Postholes/molds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="text"/>	Mill raceway	<input type="text"/>
Paling ditch/fence	<input type="text"/>	Road/walkway	<input type="text"/>	Wheel pit	<input type="text"/>

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1: 1880 +/- 35 years BP Reliability Low Sample 2: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 3: +/- years BP Reliability

PITT-1213: charcoal "samples" from basin-shaped pit (Feat 2). Assoc. w/ 140 non-diagnostic lithics, 3 Potomac Crk. sherds, & 9 frags turtle shell.

Sample 4: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 5: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 6: +/- years BP Reliability

Sample 7: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 8: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 9: +/- years BP Reliability

☐ Additional radiocarbon results available



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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC

☐ Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Clifton Site (18CH358) in northern Charles County, MD is a stratified multi-component site with evidence of Early Archaic through Late Woodland short-term camps. Evidence of an early to mid-18th century deposit, possibly related to a plantation known as "Hopewell" is also present at the site. The site is situated on a floodplain and low, level terrace flanked by swamp and a nearby drainage. The water in the vicinity of the site is fresh, but sluggish, creating a swampy wooded wetland on the floodplain. Soils mapped in the immediate vicinity of the site include the Bibb and Sassafras soils, the Croom soils, and the Woodstown soils.

During the fall of 1991 a Phase Ib survey lead to the identification of Site 18CH358. The area surrounding the site was subjected to Phase Ib work because of the impending construction of a wetland by the Maryland State Highway Administration. This wetland was to be created to mitigate the impact to natural wetlands caused by construction on MD Route 228. Grading and flooding would result in significant alterations to the site and the area surrounding it. Systematic shovel testing was carried out across the site and resulted in an artifact distribution showing the central portion of the site to be located at the northeastern end of a cultivated field on the floodplain. The site measured 80 meters north/south by 140 meters east/west.

The site's Phase Ib prehistoric artifact assemblage was composed exclusively of lithic material and consisted of 13 tools, 1 core, and 179 pieces of debitage. Although most of the artifacts were found within the plowzone, two bifaces, one core, and 14 pieces of lithic debitage were recovered from subplowzone contexts. Five diagnostic bifaces ranging in age from the Late Archaic to Late Woodland periods were recovered. Those found in the plowzone included a quartzite Holmes point, a quartz Halifax point, and a black chert Levanna point. Subplowzone deposits yielded a gray chert Rossville biface and a quartzite Jack's Reef point. The nine other tools consisted of 5 non-diagnostic bifaces, 2 scrapers, and 1 retouched flake, all recovered from the plowzone, and one core from a subplowzone context. Due to the presence of prehistoric cultural materials in subplowzone contexts and the potential for the site to yield subsurface features, Phase II investigations of the site were recommended.

Researchers returned to the site in October of 1992 to conduct this Phase II testing. Work began with the establishment of a mapping and excavation grid. Following several attempts to relocate the Phase Ib site datum, it was determined that it had been recently removed during harvesting of the cultivated field. The Phase II site datum was, therefore, established in the northwest corner of the agricultural field, at approximately the same location as the Phase Ib datum so that results would be somewhat comparable. This site datum was tied to a permanent datum off-site where further disturbance would be less likely. A transit was set up at the datum and two baselines were established and marked with pinflags at 10 m intervals. The north/south baseline was oriented to magnetic north. Using a compass and 100 m tapes, the field was gridded into 5 m strips to guide the plowing of the site for surface collection. Every other strip was plowed, leaving a 5 meter "gap" between plowed strips that could be tested later. The plowed strips were further sub-divided into 5 m square collection units.

Gridding and plowing was immediately followed by intensive surface collection of the portion of the cultivated field in which prehistoric cultural materials were identified during Phase Ib investigations. The site was collected in 5 X 5 m surface collection units. A total of 461 units were collected. In order to ensure equal coverage, all units were inspected for a timed, two-minute period. This provided a consistent means for sampling artifact densities across the site within the approved time and budgetary constraints of the project. At the end of the two-minute period, all observed prehistoric cultural materials and all diagnostic historic/modern materials were collected and placed in bags marked with their unit's coordinates. Recognizably recent materials and non-diagnostic historic/modern materials, such as undecorated whiteware and clear glass, were recorded but not collected. Field tallies of artifacts were plotted on the site map in the field to identify artifact distributions and aid in the placement of 1 X 1 m test units.

Following the completion of the surface collection, eleven 1 X 1 m test units were excavated in areas of both high and low artifact density in order to evaluate site stratigraphy and determine the potential for intact features and deposits. The test units were positioned in the center of the unplowed 5 m wide strips that had been left between the plowed strips. They were concentrated in areas of high surface artifact density along the east edge of the field. Units were also placed in areas of moderate surface artifact density in the north end of the field and in low-density areas in the south and southwest ends of the field in order to test the depth and density of subsurface artifacts in these areas.

All 1 X 1 m units were hand excavated by natural stratigraphy within 10 cm arbitrary levels. The soils removed were screened through hardware cloth. When a zone of mottled stratigraphy was encountered in the test units, it was screened as a separate unit so as not to skew recovery rates from clearly defined strata. All prehistoric materials were collected, while historic/modern materials from test units were recorded but not collected. Excavation continued at least 10 cm into the B horizon and 10 cm below the last recovered artifact. Following excavation, the north wall of each unit, and in some cases a second wall, was drawn and photographed to document specific strata or disturbances. Four units were backfilled as completed, while the remaining 7 were covered over until they could be examined by a soils scientist.

Following completion of a majority of the 1 X 1 m test units, plowzone stripping of selected areas of the site was conducted in order to expose subplowzone deposits and permit an inspection of these deposits for features. The plowzone was mechanically scraped away with a backhoe in approximately 10 cm increments until the top of the B horizon was exposed. Archeological technicians then scraped the stripped areas with flat shovels and hoes to expose a clean surface and identify stains representing possible cultural features. These stains were bisected in order to determine whether they were cultural or non-cultural phenomenon. Stains determined to be cultural features were treated as described below. Diagnostic artifacts noted during stripping and scraping activities were collected and archived in bags labeled by the coordinates of the 5 X 5 m block in which they were located.

Each feature identified at the site was carefully cleaned by trowelling to clearly determine its boundaries. The feature's position was plotted on the site map and the feature was recorded in plan view (both through detailed mapping and photography). The feature was then cross-sectioned along its long axis and half of the fill was removed and screened through hardware cloth. The resulting feature profile was photographed and mapped. The second half of the feature was removed by natural stratigraphy, with a portion being collected for flotation and the remaining fill being screened. All artifacts during feature excavation were collected.

Two feature numbers were assigned during Phase II investigations. A soil anomaly discovered during the excavation of a test unit in the southeastern section of the site was designated Feature 1. Following cross sectioning, Feature 1 was determined to be a rodent burrow. Feature 2 was identified during plowzone stripping in the high artifact density area along the east side of the agricultural field. It appeared at the top of the newly exposed B horizon as an elongated



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oval stain composed of oxidized soil and charcoal flecks/chunks. It measured 114 cm X 44 cm and had a generally basin shaped profile with a depth of 25 cm. Its upper surface was disturbed by 2 recent plowscars extending north/south through the center of the feature. Fresh, green grass observed at the base of these plowscars indicated that they were the result of plowing conducted on the initial day of Phase II fieldwork. Historic artifacts (glass and ceramics) and lithic debris were noted on the upper surface of the feature and several pieces of lithic debris were observed on the B horizon surface surrounding the feature. Cultural materials were recovered throughout the feature in both the heavily oxidized and lightly mottled oxidized layers. Feature 2 contained 152 prehistoric artifacts (1 biface, 1 core, 138 pieces of debitage, 3 sherds of cord-marked, sand-tempered pottery, and 9 fragments of turtle shell) and 18 pieces of historic/modern glass and ceramic. Historic/modern artifacts were recovered exclusively from the upper few cm of the feature disturbed by recent plowscars. Only prehistoric artifacts were recovered below these plowscars. No diagnostic lithic artifacts were recovered from Feature 2. The 3 ceramic sherds were tentatively identified as Potomac Creek ware, dating to the latter part of the Late Woodland Period (AD 1300-1600).

Charcoal samples collected from the upper profile of Feature 2, directly below the plow disturbance, were submitted for radiocarbon dating. The charcoal yielded a date of 1880 radiocarbon years before present with an error range of 35 years. This yields a 2 sigma calibrated calendrical age range of AD 60 – 229, placing Feature 2 largely in the Middle Woodland time period. The difference between this date and the apparent age of the pottery from the feature (more typically dated to the Late Woodland) may be due to incorrect identification of the small, weathered sherds, or the collection of multiple charcoal “samples” for a single radiocarbon date.

A total of 125 flaked stone tools was recovered from all contexts during Phase II investigations. These include 47 projectile points (39 quartz, 4 quartzite, 4 rhyolite), 45 bifaces (34 quartz & 11 quartzite), 15 quartz unifaces, and 18 modified/retouched flakes (15 quartz, 1 quartzite, & 2 rhyolite). Thirty-six of the projectile points have been assigned to established types representing the Early Archaic, Late Archaic, and Late Woodland time periods. The diagnostic point collection consists of 1 quartz LeCroy, 11 quartz Halifax, 2 quartz Brewerton, 7 quartz Piscataway, 6 Lamoka (5 quartz & 1 quartzite), 4 Holmes (3 quartzite & 1 rhyolite), 3 quartz Bare Island, 1 quartz Buggs Island, and a quartz Late Woodland triangular point (probably Levanna). Other flaked stone lithics encountered during the Phase II testing include 46 cores (44 quartz, 1 quartzite, & 1 chert), and 2,889 pieces of lithic debris/debitage (2,381 quartz, 325 quartzite, 79 rhyolite, 63 chert, 26 red chert, 15 other). One piece of groundstone was recovered during the Phase II investigations. This specimen is a spherical cobble with one round face and one ground face, with evidence of battering as well. This specimen was picked up in the field by a local collector who visited the site during Phase II work and brought it to the attention of excavators. It's provenience within the site is not known. Four prehistoric pottery sherds were recovered; one from the plowzone and 3 from the aforementioned Feature 2. Two are rimsherds and 2 are body sherds. All have been tentatively identified as Potomac Creek ware. Nine fragments of bone were recovered from a flotation sample collected from the fill of Feature 2. These were identified as turtle shell.

Fifty historic/modern specimens were collected from the plowed surface of the site and from the fill of Feature 2. The specimens from the surface represent a small sample of diagnostic artifacts observed and recorded during the surface collection. The large majority of surface historic/modern artifacts were not collected. All specimens, historic/modern or prehistoric, observed in the fill of Feature 2 were collected in order to document possible modern disturbance of the feature. The Phase II historic modern collection consists of 30 pieces of ceramic (whiteware and porcelain), 17 pieces of glass, 2 fragments of natural wood, and 1 clam shell fragment. The earliest date of manufacture identified for the ceramic wares represented is 1805 but all continued to be manufactured into the 20th century as well. It is likely that the large majority of the historic/modern materials collected and observed at the site results from the import of garbage that was spread across the field for the feeding of hogs during the 1930s and 40s.

During the course of Phase II fieldwork, several local collectors visited the site and indicated that the field has been subject to non-systematic collection by amateurs for many years. Because the site appears to have been in cultivation only between approximately 1960 and the mid 1970s, collecting has not been as intensive as on many sites. Two of the collectors visiting the site have allowed archeologists to document their collections, which have included such prehistoric items as LeCroy, Piscataway and Late Woodland triangular points, as well as at least one grooved stone axe.

Several results of the Phase II assemblage analysis had important implications for evaluating the Clifton site. First, the surface collection, while representing a valid means of determining the general distribution of artifacts contained within the plowzone, cannot be used to characterize the size and raw material distributions of debris contained within subsurface deposits. Analysis indicates that there was collection technique bias for both large size and white quartz in the surface collection as compared to the collection from the screened excavations.

Second, and perhaps most importantly, analysis has determined that the cultural debris recovered from the plowzone and those recovered from the subplowzone B horizon during screened excavations represent independent populations. This interpretation is based upon the size and raw material distributions of chipped-stone debris and cores and it is unlikely to have been affected by amateur archeologist surface collections. This is important because it also indicates that the plowzone materials cannot be used to predict the nature of the subplowzone materials. The fact that the two artifact populations are independent can be explained by several possible factors. The artifacts recovered from the plowzone represent a mixture of occupations possibly spanning several time periods. As a result, they represent an averaging of attributes pertaining to different lithic technologies and perhaps site functions. The materials contained within the B horizon, on the other hand, may represent attributes of a more limited occupational span or the averaging of attributes from populations different from those contained within the plowzone. Given the limited extent of subplowzone excavations during Phase II, data did not exist to determine which of these options is more likely to explain the differences between the two populations. Diagnostic projectile points recovered during Phase II were from the Early and Late Archaic periods. However, Early to Middle Woodland projectile points were recovered from subplowzone deposits during the Phase II investigations and Probable Late Woodland pottery sherds were encountered in a feature. Additional excavations would be required to determine the temporal origin of these deposits.

Third, two artifact clusters were identified on the surface of the site. One concentration, located along the southeast edge of the field, was characterized by a high frequency of debris, tools, and cores. The second concentration, situated at the extreme north edge of the field consisted of a high density of debitage alone. These clusters appear to correlate with the distribution of artifacts contained within the plowzone and show a moderate correlation with artifact densities in the B horizon. These high artifact densities appear to be associated with higher elevations at the site. Additionally, one of the artifact clusters was associated with Feature 2, which contained prehistoric artifacts, floral (charcoal) and faunal remains, and yielded a radiocarbon assay of 1880±35 years BP.

Based on the location of the Clifton site on a low terrace and the flood plain suggests that it may have served as a temporary procurement or processing camps oriented to the exploitation of wetland and wetland-related resources. The site was apparently utilized repeatedly from the Early Archaic through possibly Late Woodland periods. Based on the results of Phase II testing, the Clifton Site (18CH358) was determined to have the potential to yield information concerning prehistoric settlement and subsistence. The excavation of Feature 2 revealed that the site had a moderate to high potential for the recovery of additional intact features and that floral and faunal remains were likely to be preserved at the site. Furthermore, while the site had been plowed and the A



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horizon was disturbed, a largely intact B horizon was encountered. All of these factors led to a determination that 18CH358 was eligible for listing on the NRHP and that Phase III data recovery should be conducted if the site could not be avoided during construction of the artificial wetland.

Because avoidance did not present a feasible alternative, Phase III investigations were entered into from June to October of 1993. Prior to beginning excavations, the grid system employed during Phase II work was re-established. Phase III fieldwork focused on the two areas of high artifact density and buried cultural material identified during the Phase II investigations. These were designated Areas A and B, with "A" pertaining to the northern site locale and "B" to the southeastern site region.

A series of 10.16 cm (4 inch) bucket auger holes were placed across Area A on key gridlines. These provided detailed information concerning the thickness of the B-horizon and the depth at which the pre-Holocene gravel layer was reached. Next, a series of six 1 X 1 meter units was excavated across Area A to assess the horizontal extent of Archaic period materials within the B-horizon and to clarify their stratigraphic context. The recovery of relatively high quantities of debitage from one test unit during Phase II work, coupled with Phase III augering that demonstrated a very thick B-horizon surrounding this same unit, resulted in placement of the 6 test units in a tight cluster surrounding that original Phase II test square. North and south of this area, augering showed the gravels to be close to the surface with resultant compression of the B-horizon. This was evident in a second Phase II test unit which was re-located and excavated during Phase III to observe the profile.

Excavation of the 1 X 1 meter test units was conducted within natural soil horizons, or by 10 cm subdivisions thereof. The plowzone was removed as a single layer. Opening and closing depths were recorded at the top and bottom of each successive level or layer removed to provide vertical control of all cultural materials. Soil was removed from each level by hand trowel and shovel. Particular attention was directed to any stain of possible cultural origin, or to any change in soil color and texture that might signify a stratigraphic break. Potential feature stains were mapped in plan and cross-sectioned to ascertain their cultural status and internal structure. Rodent and root stains or other natural disturbances were mapped in plan in order to control for vertical mixing in subsoil contexts. These disturbances were excavated separately from the surrounding undisturbed matrix to avoid mixing of contexts. Excavation proceeded until sterile soil or pre-Holocene gravels were reached. All soils were screened through hardware cloth. Upon completion of each 1 X 1, a soil profile was drawn of two key walls in order to provide data bearing on cross-site stratigraphic reconstruction and photographs were taken.

All six of the clustered Phase III units revealed Archaic period materials. Block excavations were planned to expand around the area once the plowzone had been machine stripped (see below). Unexpectedly, an 18th century pit feature was encountered in the SW corner of a single 1 X 1. Up to that point, the presence of any 18th century component was completely unknown. Thus, seven unplanned 1 X 1 meter units were excavated adjacent to the partially exposed pit, which was given the designation "Feature 3". These units were excavated only to the top of the B-horizon in order to expose the feature in plan view.

A program of machine stripping to expose the upper surface of the B-horizon was initiated subsequent to the excavation of all 1 X 1 m test units in Area A. Machine stripping of the plowzone was conducted with a backhoe with a flat blade welded to the bucket. As the plowzone was removed, the top of the B-horizon was flat-shoveled to provide a clean surface for inspection. Once a portion of an area was finished, a grid system of 2 X 2 m squares was staked-out for purposes of feature mapping and recording in situ artifacts found at the top of the B-horizon. A total of 1,120 square meters was mechanically exposed in Area A. Soon after machine stripping commenced, it became apparent that additional historic features were being exposed in Area A. The work exposed an extensive distribution of historic postholes and molds and pit features that extended beyond the stripped area. Ten of the postmolds were cross-sectioned and 5 of the historic pits (Features 3, 9, 11, 16, & 17) were excavated following the feature excavation strategies outlined above. Four linear stains were also encountered and recorded. These were interpreted to be "slot fence" stains. No prehistoric features were identified at this stage.

Within the stripped area, a total of 32 square meters of B-horizon was excavated in Area A in the form of a contiguous block (a wide trench actually). Two square meters of this block include two 1 X 1 meter units already excavated, while the remaining portion consisted of seven contiguous 2 X 2 meter units and a single 1 X 2 meter unit. Excavation of this block was initiated close to the cluster of Archaic period lithics from Phase II. Excavation of the block followed the general procedures outlined above, except that excavation into the blocks obviously was begun at the top of the subplowzone contact after machine stripping. Elevations were taken from transit set datums, tied to a single point within the overall site grid.

Excavation of the block revealed relatively deep B-horizon deposits in its northwest end. The B-horizon thinned out and gravel (probably a braided stream channel or point bar remnant) ascended upwards to the south. The middle to upper portions of the B-horizon contained a minimally stratified sequence of Middle to Late Archaic cultural material. Though flaking debris was found in the lower levels of the B-horizon, no diagnostics were found in these levels. Although removed by stripping prior to excavation, the plowzone above the B-horizon contained mostly Late Archaic and Woodland period artifacts. Only one prehistoric feature was encountered within the block excavation in Area A. This was a loose cluster of fire-cracked rock, probably dating to the Late Archaic period, located near the eastern end of the block. This possible disturbed hearth was designated Feature 8. In combination with the historic features encountered elsewhere in Area A, a total of 22 features and 113 postmolds were exposed. Ultimately, all but 5 of the postmolds were cross-sectioned. Forty were revealed to be postmolds placed within excavated postholes and some contained daub fragments, and all are thought to be associated with the historic component.

Phase III fieldwork in Area B followed the same general sequence of tasks as was implemented in Area A, comprising a program of: 1) augering and excavation of 1 X 1 meter test units, 2) machine stripping, and 3) the excavation of several block units to sample the buried Archaic materials. In addition, 5 of the 6 Phase II 1 X 1 m test units in this area were re-opened for purposes of profile examination. Fieldwork in Area B began with the placement of a series of 9 bucket auger holes on key grid lines to gain a better understanding of the underlying site stratigraphy and guide placement of the 1 X 1 m test units. Profiles from the auger holes showed that the thickness of the underlying B-horizon was quite variable across Area B, being deeper toward the eastern end of the area and shallower in the middle and west end. This suggested that few areas existed within the major portion of Area B that would likely contain deep deposits of Archaic-age cultural materials. It also suggested that any buried cultural deposits may be compressed, resulting in poor resolution between separate occupational episodes or chronological periods.

Excavation of four 1 X 1 meter test units began subsequent to the placement of auger holes. Only in a single unit to the north was an appreciable thickness of B-horizon encountered. Given this information, isolated block units were placed adjacent to this phase III test unit and a re-opened Phase II 1 X 1 where deeply buried Archaic materials were encountered.

A total of 523 square meters of plowzone was machine stripped in Area B in three separate tracts. One of the tracts was situated at the eastern edge of Area B, adjacent to the area where Feature 2 was encountered during Phase II testing. Although numerous artifacts were uncovered during machine stripping of



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Site Number: 18CH358

Site Name: Clifton

Prehistoric ☒

Other name(s)

Historic ☒

Unknown ☐

Brief Description:

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this tract, neither additional features nor ceramics were discovered. In one of the other tracts (in the central portion of Area B) a small circular stain, designated Feature 12, was uncovered. Cross-sectioning showed this to be a recent 20th Century disturbance of shallow depth, perhaps related to agricultural activities. Although no cultural features were found, the stripping did expose scattered fire-cracked rock and flaking debris in the top of the exposed B-horizon. Artifacts that were left in situ at the top of the B-horizon were mapped in plan. The final tract was the smallest and northern-most. No cultural features were encountered. However, three soil discolorations were given feature numbers. These were designated Features 18, 19, and 20 and were mapped and cross-sectioned. All these stains proved to be of natural origin, perhaps related to former tree root systems. As in the other tracts, a number of artifacts were found in situ in the top of the exposed B-horizon. These were mapped in plan.

A total of 24 square meters of block excavation was placed in Area B to sample the artifact-bearing B-Horizon. These were distributed between four 2 X 2 meter units and one 2 X 4 meter unit, the latter simply consisting of 2 contiguous 2 X 2 meter squares. The 2 X 4 m block was excavated adjacent to a Phase III 1 X 1 where B-horizon deposits were found to contain relatively high debitage counts. Two of the 2 X 2 blocks were placed to test the deposits revealed in a Phase II 1 X 1 which appeared to contain stratified Archaic components in the B-horizon. An isolated 2 X 2 meter unit was excavated to test a potential Lamoka component in the B-horizon. And a final 2 X 2 unit was also excavated to test a potential B-horizon Lamoka component. This unit was placed over a Lamoka point found in situ at the top of the B-horizon after machine stripping operations. The other block units were all placed in areas that had been stripped during Phase II. Thus, none of the block units have any artifact counts from plowzone horizons.

The block excavations in Area B revealed generally shallow B-horizon deposits overlying an extremely variable pre-Holocene gravel surface. Flaking debris was common in the first two 10 cm levels of the B-horizon in the 2 X 4 meter block as well as the easternmost 2 X 2 block. The isolated 2 X 2 block as well as the two blocks placed near the Phase II unit revealed a relatively shallow B-horizon resting on gravel. The two southern-most blocks had thin, gravel-laden B-horizons resting on the pre-Holocene gravel surface. The profiles in these units reveal that the Phase II test unit was probably excavated into a topographic low point in the pre-Holocene gravel surface that had filled in with fine-grained sediment. It strongly suggests that the cultural material recovered from it, especially from the lower levels, may have mixed contexts, perhaps having washed off of the higher elevations immediately to the north.

Excavation of the easternmost block revealed a small cluster of fire-cracked rock (possible hearth), designated Feature 7, within the first 10 cm level of the B-horizon. The only other feature uncovered during the course of the Phase III excavations in Area B was a cluster of ceramic sherds (Feature 25); pieces of the same vessel. Most of the cultural material recovered from the upper B-horizon in the block units probably belongs to one or more Late Archaic period occupations identified by Lamoka projectile points. Given poor stratigraphic separation within the B-horizon due to its relative thinness over the gravel surface, materials from earlier components (Middle Archaic period occupations) are likely mixed with Late Archaic materials. No additional evidence of later Woodland period components were identified in the block excavation units.

Prehistoric artifacts encountered during all stages of the Phase III data recovery at the Clifton Site include 85 projectile points, 89 bifaces (69 early-middle sarge, 9 late stage, 11 indeterminate), 36 unifaces (22 D-shaped end scraper and 14 retouched flakes), 75 cores or core fragments (including tested cobbles), 10,065 pieces of flake debitage, 2 ground quartzite mortars (metates) and a quartzite mano, 3 pitted nutting/anvil stones, 18 hammerstones, a single steatite bowl fragment, a full-grooved greenstone axe, a groundstone gorget, a gorget fragment, a ground slate or greenstone fragment which may be a 3rd gorget or a bannerstone fragment, a cylindrical granitic pestle, 36 ceramic sherds (including 2 rimsherds), and 2,491 pieces of fire-cracked rock. Among the aforementioned projectile points were 4 Kirk corner-notched, 3 LeCroy, a Stanly point, 2 Morrow Mountains, 1 Guilford, 12 Halifax points, 1 Otter Creek, 17 Lamokas, 5 Savannah River points, 1 Wading River point, 3 Claggett, 1 Adena, 1 side-notched Meadowood, 5 Piscataways, 4 Rossvilles, and a possible Levanna point, and 24 points or point fragments that could not be typed. Among the ceramic sherds encountered were 5 Accokeek body sherds, a probable Townsend body sherd, a small Potomac Creek body sherd, and 29 Potomac Creek sherds from Feature 25 (2 rims, 3 neck, 18 body, 2 spalls, 4 crumbs).

Phase III fieldwork at 18CH358 revealed extensive prehistoric cultural material spanning a date range from the Early Archaic period through to the Late Woodland period. Of particular note was the recovery of a relatively intact Middle to Late Archaic sequence preserved within the B-horizon of Area A. This sequence was found stratified within weathered alluvium deposited by Mattawoman Creek during the early to middle Holocene. Variable preservation of living floors in this area associated with the Middle to Late Archaic components allowed identification of specific tasks that may have been carried out during the course of these occupations. The range of tools for both Middle and Late Archaic components was restricted to uniface categories, bifaces, core fragments, and discarded points. Debitage for all levels reflects both primary and secondary flaking activities. These artifact classes, redundant from level to level, reflect a narrow range of activities focused on exploitation of local cobble sources (quartz and quartzite) for stone tool production, scraping activities (perhaps tied to the processing of projectile shafts), and the curation of hafted bifaces. These kinds of activities likely reflect a range of adaptive strategies that were embedded within the context of short-term hunting forays. In the Late Archaic level of the block, such activities were conducted within the region of two small hearths or fire-cracked-rock clusters. Artifacts lacking from these components are those pertaining to the processing and preparation of plant food items. These items, by their absence, suggest that the Archaic components are best characterized as short-term or transient hunting stations with a narrow range of indicated tasks. Although Late Archaic projectile points were found in shallow sub-plowzone contexts in Area B, a similar relative sequence, such as documented in Area A, was not defined due to the thinness of the alluvium.

Woodland period components, though present in both Area A and B, were not as well represented in the site area as those dating to the Archaic stage. The Woodland period occupations probably reflect similar kinds of tasks to those carried out during the Archaic periods. Although site contexts prevent isolation of Woodland period specific assemblages, it is notable that Woodland diagnostics are mostly projectile points and not ceramics. Those ceramics that are present may be related to the conveyance of foodstuffs or other commodities to the site from larger base camps, rather than being reflective of extensive on-site food preparation and/or storage. If such activities were being conducted, a larger ceramic repertoire would be expected. The 2 small mortars and mano do reflect minimal plant food preparation, but they cannot be associated with any specific component.

Thus, the Archaic and Woodland stage components documented at the Clifton site all appear to be functionally similar, representing short-term forays of limited duration. The data suggest that the occupations at 18CH358 focused on the exploitation of local quartz and quartzite as part of a generalized exploitation pattern utilizing the resources of the Mattawoman Creek area.

The eighteenth century component encountered during the course of Phase III data recovery was entirely unexpected. The history of its discovery and description of the procedures followed during excavation have been outlined above. However, this discovery necessitated archival research by the project technicians in order to place the site in its proper historical context. Archival research revealed very little that could be used to identify the historic site inhabitants. It appears that the site was once part of a tract known as "Hopewell" southwest of the Piney Branch. In the 19th century the tract appears to have been renamed "Harmony". Little is known about the tract or its proprietors. "Hopewell" was resurveyed by the Charles County surveyor general in 1704, at the request of Stephen Cawood, at that time the owner of a nearby tract called "Hull". At the time of this survey, the tract measured 521 acres and was owned by



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James Smallwood. The parcel may have passed into the hands of Sarah Smallwood later in the eighteenth century before it was acquired by a James Marshall (an English merchant turned farmer). The eighteenth century component at Clifton, therefore, contains the material remains of activities that took place while the parcel was under the control of either the Marshall or Smallwood families.

The features encountered during the Phase III excavations of the 18th century component are described briefly above. These features include a series of refuse pits of various shapes and sizes, thin, shallow trenches from erecting slot fences, and numerous postholes and molds. Three of these features contained small concentrations of 18th century ceramics manufactured as early as c. 1725. Feature 3, a large refuse pit in Area A, yielded 5 sherds. These include imported wares from China and the Westerwald, along with some of the finer British ceramics. The material suggests the feature was created in the first half of the 18th century. Feature 5, a slot fence trench, produced 2 small sherds. The first sherd is a small chip of porcelain carrying part of a hatched design in underglaze blue. The second sherd is a small piece of buff-colored pottery with manganese glaze on both the interior and exterior surfaces. And finally, Feature 16 yielded 25 sherds contemporaneous with those encountered in Feature 3. These include 3 Westerwald, 3 white salt-glazed stoneware sherds, 5 yellowware, and a single piece of plain whiteware. Several plowscars are present on the surface of the feature and may explain the 19th century yellowware and whiteware.

The full historic artifact collection assembled during the Phase III work at 18CH358 consists of 182 architectural objects (including window glass, nails, and daub), 1,734 kitchen items (430 ceramics, 430 pieces of glassware, and 874 animal bones), 21 gunflints, and 293 miscellaneous objects. This assemblage includes both 19th and 20th century refuse. The eighteenth century artifacts were almost all recovered from feature (or postmold) proveniences. Absolute tallies of these artifact types are not provided in the full site report and the discussion seems to lump such objects as tobacco pipes in with "ceramics", and kitchen utensils under "miscellaneous". Thus, the historic artifact tables above are not terribly reliable. Flotation samples from Features 3 and 9 (a pit) were analyzed and found to contain 5,093 carbonized wood fragments (5,022 unidentifiable, 39 oak, 31 hickory, and 1 willow or poplar). Seeds recovered from the flotation samples were few in number, totaling only 11 specimens, six of which were unidentifiable. Identifiable seeds include 2 corn kernels, 1 wheat grain, a black cherry pit, and a pokeweed seed. The remaining carbonized botanical remains consist of 4 fungus fragments, 3 monocot stems, and 3 fragments of resinous plant. Animal species in the faunal assemblage include pig and cow, deer, raccoon, squirrel, rat, crow, duck and mallard, catfish, yellow perch, and turtle.

The two most interesting aspects of the eighteenth century assemblage are its quality and its lack of volume and variety. Taken as a whole, the 18th century assemblage indicates a relative degree of affluence (items such as imported ceramics, a snuff jar, and ornate furniture items). However, the artifact count is low, and the assemblage does not contain the variety of materials that one would expect to find in a domestic assemblage dating to the early or mid-18th century. By this point in history a considerable volume and variety of material goods were available. The material culture is surely under-represented in the features excavated within the site area sampled during Phase III investigation. Architectural materials would be expected to be greater if these materials were in their primary context as well.

Given that the features and postmolds mapped in Area A extended to the south, west, and northwest of the area exposed, it is likely that the main occupational area was not encountered and the component, as currently delimited, is on the outskirts of a main occupation area. Despite the extensive number of post stains, no discernible pattern that resolved into definite structures was observed. Additional research would be necessary to determine if the domestic site with which these, apparently, peripheral post stains were associated is outside the excavation area. However, since the artificial wetland is now built, it is not known to what extent this is even possible. In summary, excavation of a portion of an 18th century domestic component at the Clifton site provided a tantalizing glimpse of early Maryland settlement. Unfortunately, more detailed interpretations cannot be offered lacking evidence of the core domestic structures and a knowledge of what portions of the site universe the features exposed during the Phase III investigation represent.

Both the prehistoric and historic deposits at 18CH358 would have been largely destroyed by subsequent construction of the MD 228 wetland area at the site. While the prehistoric deposits appear to have been well-documented, questions remain regarding the 18th century occupation. It is not known if any portions of this component remain, outside the area impacted by grading and subsequent flooding to create the wetland. Thus, the research potential of 18CH358 remains uncertain.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

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